

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SOFIA 0737

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E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: EEWT, PLOS, BU  
SUBJECT: BULGARIAN REQUEST FOR BILATERAL MARITIME AGREEMENT

REF: STATE 068365

1. WE HAVE BEEN REFLECTING ON WHAT APPROPRIATE CONCESSIONS WE MIGHT SEEK FROM THE BULGARIANS IN EXCHANGE FOR REDUCING OUR POST ACCESS REQUIREMENTS, WITHOUT COMING UP WITH ANY VERY GOOD SUGGESTIONS. THE FACT IS THAT THERE DOES NOT SEEM TO BE ANYTHING CLOSELY COMPARABLE WHICH WE ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING -- EITHER WITHIN OR OUTSIDE THE AREA OF MARITIME AFFAIRS.

2. OF COURSE WE WANT A NUMBER OF THINGS FROM THE BULGARIANS, BUT THESE ARE MAINLY LONG-TERM AND IN AREAS WHERE THE MOST WE CAN PROBABLY HOPE FOR IS GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT: E.G., INCREASED ACCESS TO BULGARIAN GOVERNMENT AND PARTY OFFICIALS, EXPANSION OF TRADE, BULGARIAN PUBLICATION OF MORE RELEVANT ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL DATA, IMPROVED ACCESS FOR US BUSINESSMEN TO BULGARIAN END-USERS AND DECISION MAKERS, FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF 1977 CULTURAL AGREEMENT, FREER DISSEMINATION OF PRODUCTS OF US MEDIA IN BULGARIA, MORE BALANCED PORTRAYAL OF US IN BULGARIAN MEDIA, SIMPLIFIED AND FASTER VISA PROCEDURES, RESOLUTION OF SOME 20-ODD DIVIDED FAMILY CASES, AND SO  
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ON. WE HOPE THE BULGARIANS WILL APPROVE A US NAVY SHIP VISIT TO VARNA THIS SUMMER, BUT THIS IS A ONE-TIME VISIT AND WOULD NOT MAKE AN APPROPRIATE TRADE-OFF.

3. THE LONGSTANDING BONDHOLDERS ISSUE, WHICH SHOULD BE RESOLVED BEFORE WE CAN PROCEED MUCH FURTHER IN NORMALIZING OUR RELATIONS, MAY FINALLY BE STARTING TO MOVE WITH THE

BULGARIAN SIDE PROPOSING TALKS IN WASHINGTON AT THE END OF MAY. BUT THEY HAVE PULLED OUT OF THESE TALKS BEFORE AFTER DATES WERE AGREED TO. IF THERE SHOULD BE FURTHER DELAYS ON THE BULGARIAN SIDE IN GETTING THESE NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY, OR IF ONCE UNDERWAY THERE ARE UNDUE DELAYS IN REACHING AN AGREEMENT, DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO CONSIDER MAKING THE PROPOSED MARITIME CONCESSION CONTINGENT ON A SATISFACTORY BONDHOLDERS SETTLEMENT.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROPOSED REDUCTION IN PORT ACCESS REQUIREMENTS FOR BULGARIAN MERCHANT AND PASSENGER VESSELS FROM 14 DAYS TO SEVEN DAYS ADVANCE NOTICE WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO THE PRESENT STATE OF US-BULGARIAN RELATIONS. WITH THE CZECHS (WHOSE PRESENT RELATIONS WITH US ARE MUCH MORE STRAINED) ALREADY ENJOYING SEVEN-DAY ACCESS AND WITH THE USSR, HUNGARY, POLAND AND ROMANIA HAVING FOUR-DAY ACCESS, IT MAKES SENSE TO CONSIDER BRINGING BULGARIA AT LEAST IN LINE WITH CZECHOSLOVAKIA. THUS WE FAVOR THE REDUCTION. WE ALSO AGREE THAT WE SHOULD SEEK SOME SUITABLE QUID PRO QUO WHICH SATISFIES THE NSDM 340 REQUIREMENT. WE WILL BE INTERESTED IN LEARNING WHAT THE BULGARIANS COME UP WITH AS AN OFFER.  
GARTHOFF

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